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INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

This present report contains information on progress in the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as defined by the General Assembly in its resolutions 44/236 and 46/149. It also describes a number of specific actions and activities which address the issue of supporting disaster reduction strategies at the national level, the implementation of international demonstration projects for the Decade, plans for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to be held in 1994 and organizational and financial issues. The 12-point Plan of Action towards the Conference is set out in the annex.

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CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 5	3
II.	INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE	6 - 25	5
	A. Special High-Level Council	6 - 8	5
	B. Progress in programme development	9 - 24	6
	C. Scientific and Technical Committee	25	10
III.	ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	26 - 85	10
	A. United Nations Children's Fund	27 - 31	10
	B. United Nations Development Programme	32 - 38	12
	C. United Nations Environment Programme	39 - 41	13
	D. Economic Commission for Europe	42 - 43	13
	E. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	44 - 45	14
	F. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	46	14
	G. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	47 - 54	15
	H. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	55 - 66	16
	I. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	67 - 71	18
	J. World Health Organization	72 - 74	19
	K. International Telecommunication Union	75 - 76	20
	L. World Meteorological Organization	77 - 85	20
IV.	ACTIVITIES OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASSOCIATIONS	86 - 87	22
V.	ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS	88 - 96	22
Annex.	Towards the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction: a 12-point Plan of Action adopted by the Special High-Level Council		25

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in the annex to its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, requested the Secretary-General to report biennially on the activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. By that resolution, it will be recalled, the Assembly launched the Decade as a period of time during which there would be special and concentrated efforts to reduce the loss of life and economic damage caused by disasters, by the of application of advanced scientific knowledge and state-of-the-art technology to the evaluation, control and prevention of natural hazards. At its forty-sixth session, the Assembly, in resolution 46/149 of 18 December 1991, took note of the progress report of the Secretary-General (A/46/266-E/1991/106) and the first annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade (A/46/266-E/1991/106/Add.1), and endorsed the specific targets for disaster mitigation to be reached by the year 2000 and the convening of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

2. A number of important developments regarding the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 44/236, have taken place since the submission of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. The present report provides information on those developments. The attention of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly is called in particular to the annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee (which will be issued as an addendum to the present report) and the recommendations of the Special High-Level Council which are included in the 12-point Plan of Action (see annex). In addition to the present report, the Secretary-General will present updated information on the Decade and the 1994 Conference at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

3. At the second session of the Special High-Level Council, on 25 January 1993, the Secretary-General emphasized that in the field of natural disaster reduction we can do more. He said that there is no reason why we should wait passively for the next natural disaster to strike. We should mobilize scientific knowledge and technological know-how. We should give a positive response to the strong political interest and commitment of the international community. There is no hard-and-fast division - in terms of their effects on civilian populations - between conflicts and wars, and natural disasters. Droughts, floods, earthquakes and cyclones are just as destructive for communities and settlements as wars and civil confrontation. Natural disasters add to the economic and social instability which now affects many countries. But just as preventive diplomacy can foresee and prevent the outbreak of war, so the effects of natural disasters can be foreseen and contained. One of the Secretary-General's first decisions on taking office was to redirect the Organization's resources towards crisis and disaster management and the alleviation of the suffering of disaster victims. Indeed, the General Assembly, in its resolution 44/236, which defines policy for the Decade, stressed the importance of preventive action before disaster strikes.

4. The underlying principle of the Decade, as expressed in the International Framework of Action, is the premise that each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure and other national

assets from the impact of natural disasters. Indeed, international financial and technical assistance can only provide limited help; the main actions to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters must be initiated and pursued at the country level.

5. The two international organs of the Decade, the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee, have highlighted a number of actions and activities pursuant to the objectives of the Decade. These include:

(a) Calling on all vulnerable countries to proceed forcefully, because of increasing disaster losses, with the formulation and implementation, in the context of national and local development processes and with the participation of all concerned sectors of society having the potential to contribute to progress in disaster mitigation, of prevention and preparedness strategies and projects designed to reduce each country's vulnerability, particularly that of children and other vulnerable groups, to natural hazards which need not necessarily lead to disasters for the stricken communities;

(b) Calling on all countries to take an active part in the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which will focus on the theme "A safer world for the twenty-first century", and in its preparatory process, by undertaking systematic assessments of national and local disaster risks, with the assistance of the intersectoral national committees for the Decade and also by organizing multidisciplinary national and regional technical meetings, so as to ensure that the entire potential of each country, including its scientific and technical capability, is fully used towards disaster reduction, and by preparing comprehensive reports on the progress achieved and plans for future action to be presented at the Conference;

(c) Requesting that the Conference, which is to be convened with full United Nations participation, be the basis for a progress report and a proposed action programme for the second half of the Decade, to be submitted to the General Assembly in connection with the mid-term review of the Decade;

(d) Recognizing the interrelationship between environmental concerns and disaster prevention already stressed in Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, and in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the importance of assessing the vulnerability of major projects to natural hazards, parallel with environmental impact assessments which are increasingly becoming a common practice; to this end the Commission for Sustainable Development, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification and drought, and the bodies established for the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change should all be requested to consider their role in reducing losses from natural disasters in conjunction with the Decade;

(e) Integrating into all bilateral and multilateral assistance projects, including investments and science and technology transfers, an assessment of the effect of their implementation on disaster vulnerability, and the disaster vulnerability of the projects themselves;

(f) Re-examining, as a matter of priority and in the light of the recent tragic experiences with earthquakes, storms and floods and the increasing economic, social and public health losses sustained as a result of disasters, the adequacy of existing land-use regulations and building codes, the validity of enforcement and monitoring procedures, and the public awareness of the benefits of those measures;

(g) Supporting the establishment of partnerships between national committees and organizations of developed and developing countries to facilitate the transfer of scientific knowledge and technology with applications in the field of natural disaster reduction;

(h) Recognizing the importance of including economic risk assessment and cost benefit analysis in governmental development and investment planning, and of supporting development projects integrating evaluations of disaster vulnerability and justifications of vulnerability reduction measures, both structural and non-structural, in the process leading to sustainable development;

(i) Calling on bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, as already requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/236, to include disaster mitigation activities in their assistance programmes, including provision of support for projects initiated as a result of the proclamation of the Decade by the Assembly;

(j) Urging countries and development agencies to provide financial assistance to support international demonstration projects; the secretariat and organizing bodies of the Decade; and developing countries wishing to participate in the Conference and to undertake preparatory work for it (i.e., national assessment reports);

(k) Expressing appreciation to those countries that have provided financial support to the Trust Fund for the Decade and calling on those countries that have not yet done so to participate in the funding of Decade activities.

II. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE

A. Special High-Level Council

6. The Secretary-General convened the second session of the Special High-Level Council on 25 January 1993 in New York to review the progress of the Decade and to obtain advice on the future direction of Decade activities. The Council adopted a 12-point Plan of Action towards the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (see annex). The Plan of Action, which was based on the results of the preparatory work of the secretariat of the Decade, including consultation with key participants in the activities of the Decade, also reflected priorities emerging at the meeting, at which was emphasized the need to build bridges between Governments and international organizations, including financing institutions such as the World Bank, and the scientific and technical communities. The Council concluded that there should be a ministerial session at the Conference, so as to achieve mobilization at the highest political level

for the second part of the Decade. To that end the Council specifically called for the support of the Secretary-General in the preparation and promotion of the Conference.

7. On that occasion the Secretary-General undertook to bring to the attention of the executive heads of organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, during the first regular session of 1993 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the need to address the root causes of disasters. At that session, held in Rome from 19 to 21 April 1993, the Committee recognized:

(a) The importance of prevention and mitigation activities and the need to ensure resources for those activities;

(b) The importance of the activities of the Decade, especially in the context of prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

(c) The importance of incorporating, within programmes and activities, measures for preventive action, including capacity-building, to reduce vulnerability, particularly of poor groups, so as to reduce disaster impact;

(d) The critical importance of disaster preparedness and disaster management training.

8. The Secretary-General plans to re-examine, in the light of the experience gained in the first three years of the Decade, the best ways of using the personal standing and capabilities of members of the Council to carry out the mandate entrusted to them by the General Assembly.

B. Progress in programme development

1. National level

9. At the national level, through the establishment of national committees or focal points, broad mobilization has been achieved in 104 countries. Representation on those committees varies from country to country; it generally comprises various ministries, scientific and research institutions, national services, non-governmental organizations and the private sector including insurance. The relatively high level of representation by government officials indicates the increasing recognition of the importance of developing a national disaster mitigation policy. However, Governments still need to be convinced to place a much higher emphasis on the integration of natural disaster prevention into the national development planning process, including a review of the disaster vulnerability of both new investments and existing key assets such as essential public services. This will be the role of the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank through consultative groups working with national planners, and it will be all the more important as, in many countries, committees have not gone beyond the initial endorsement of the aims of the Decade.

10. A large number of countries have submitted national plans and programmes for the integration of the goals of the Decade into their national disaster management and/or development strategies. Although there is still a lack of

information on the implementation of programmes in some countries, those reports that have been received list more than 100 individual projects and activities implemented at the national level.

11. Given the large number of participants involved in the Decade, good communication and coordination are particularly important for the support of the national activities. The appointment of a regional coordinator for the Latin American and Caribbean region, supported by Sweden, has greatly facilitated the implementation of the Framework of Action in that region.

12. Whereas Decade activities in developing countries concentrate on the prevention of natural disasters on their own territory, national committees of industrialized countries not only address their own country's vulnerability but also focus their attention on the incorporation and implementation of the goals of the Decade in their policies for development and humanitarian aid to developing countries.

13. The success of the Decade in promoting efforts to reduce vulnerability to disasters will be determined especially by the effective implementation of national projects and plans to attain the goals of the Decade. Although, in many countries, the process of implementation of the Framework of Action is well under way, some developing countries must be further assisted in their projects, from formulation to execution, by outside expertise, advice and funding.

2. International level

Regional activities

14. A number of participants in the Decade took the initiative of convening regional meetings focusing on disaster mitigation strategies. Those organized by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) at Guatemala City in 1991 and Kingston in 1992, by the Organization of African Unity at Addis Ababa in 1992 and jointly by the Decade secretariat and PAHO in Mexico early in 1993, as well as the "parallel sessions" (India) held in 1993 during the fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Committee, have proved to be extremely valuable, both in promoting the goals of the Decade and in the creation of new national committees or focal points. Those regional meetings were supported financially, particularly by Canada, Germany and Japan, through the Trust Fund for the Decade and direct contributions. It has become evident that the differing degrees of expertise and technical knowledge existing in a given region could be better exploited. Regional cooperation, particularly through country partnerships, as recommended by the Scientific and Technical Committee at its fourth session, will therefore be promoted in future Decade activities at the international level. For this reason it is also proposed to follow a regional approach in preparation for the Conference.

International demonstration projects

15. A complete list of international demonstration projects, which are intended to demonstrate the potential benefit deriving from the application of science and technology in disaster mitigation activities, will be found in the addendum to the present report (to be issued later). Of special concern to the

Secretary-General is the question of funding for those projects. Despite a growing awareness and interest in this activity, only a number of projects have been incorporated into national development plans and the programmes of international funding agencies, among them the European Economic Community (EEC), and Germany. Moreover, as will be indicated in the report of the Scientific and Technical Committee (to be issued as an addendum to the present report), the overall socio-economic effect of disasters is worsening. More specific attention should be paid to the increase in disaster vulnerability brought about by the development process, which frequently leads to the concentration of population, infrastructure and resources in locations exposed to disasters.

16. The Secretary-General recalls that in its resolution 44/236, proclaiming the Decade, the General Assembly recommended, in paragraph 13 of the Framework of Action, that bilateral and multilateral funding agencies take into account the disaster mitigation programmes recommended by the Scientific and Technical Committee.

World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

17. It will be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 46/149, endorsed the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Committee to convene a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994 to serve as a contribution to the mid-term review of the Decade. The Government of Japan has generously offered to host the Conference at Yokohama City from 23 to 27 May 1994. The Scientific and Technical Committee designated a Preparatory Committee, which has now met on three occasions, most recently on 7 and 8 April 1993, to draw up a programme and procedures for the Conference. The Preparatory Committee comprises representatives from the Scientific and Technical Committee, United Nations and regional organizations, national committees and the host Government.

18. The Preparatory Committee has developed a broad set of guidelines and procedures for the Conference. Follow-up work on those recommendations is being carried out by the secretariat of the Decade, but it is envisaged to broaden the participation in the preparatory process for the Conference, drawing on the responsibility and capabilities of all competent departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat and also of the specialized agencies and the programmes of the United Nations system.

19. A key element of the preparatory process will be a review of the progress achieved towards the targets in disaster mitigation to be reached by each country by the year 2000, as established by the General Assembly within the plan to achieve sustainable development. Those targets are:

(a) Comprehensive national assessments of risks from natural hazards, those assessments being taken into account in development plans;

(b) Mitigation plans at national and/or local levels, involving long-term prevention and preparedness and community awareness;

(c) Ready access to global, regional, national and local warning systems and broad dissemination of warnings.

20. Such an approach will allow the results of the Conference to contribute to the mid-term review of the Decade in 1994 by the Economic and Social Council, as required by the General Assembly. Accordingly, the aims of the Conference are:

(a) To review the accomplishments of the Decade at national, regional and international levels;

(b) To chart an action programme for the future;

(c) To exchange information on the implementation of Decade programmes and policies;

(d) To increase awareness of the importance of the progress of disaster reduction policies.

21. The Conference will feature ministerial statements on policy issues related to disaster mitigation, followed by topical sessions on, inter alia:

(a) Cost benefits of hazard mitigation;

(b) Drought management;

(c) Interrelationships between technological and natural hazards;

(d) Building hazard-resistant structures;

(e) Warning systems and preparedness for disaster reduction;

(f) Vulnerable groups and communities.

22. A review of significant regional perspectives on the second half of the Decade and the participation of United Nations and volunteer organizations will complete the scientific programme.

23. The Conference is expected to conclude its work with the adoption of a statement on natural disaster reduction. Over 1,000 participants are expected, the thrust being to exchange and provide policymakers with scientific and technical information for applications in hazard reduction, and to assess and make recommendations for redirecting the activities of the Decade.

24. The considerable interest displayed, especially in vulnerable countries, has allowed the identification of a broad range of important substantive issues to be reviewed at the Conference. Drawing on the expertise and resources of the spectrum of participants already identified by the Assembly in resolution 46/149, and taking into account the current worsening trend in economic losses caused by disasters and their negative impact on the development process and the social and political stability of vulnerable countries, the Secretary-General is convinced that the issue of disaster prevention, which is linked to environmental concerns as recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Agenda 21, requires full and priority attention by individual countries in respect of their own vulnerability and also by the international community as a whole. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Conference benefits from the full support of the United Nations, in both

substantive and organizational aspects. To allow vulnerable countries to benefit fully from the substantive discussions of topical issues and from the exchange of experience that will take place on the basis of national reports and reports of regional meetings, the conference documentation should be given broad dissemination and made available in the official languages of the United Nations; and guidelines resulting from the Conference should be transmitted to disaster mitigation authorities, research institutions, technological centres, the private sector, the media and other Decade participants world wide.

C. Scientific and Technical Committee

25. During the reporting period the Scientific and Technical Committee held two sessions, at Geneva in March 1992 and New Delhi in February 1993. The report of the Committee to the Secretary-General on those sessions will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

26. Organizations of the United Nations system participating in the Decade have continued to develop the disaster mitigation initiatives that had been formulated during the initial planning phase of the Decade. A short account of the most significant activities, based on information provided by the organizations, is provided below.

A. United Nations Children's Fund

27. For the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as the programme of the United Nations specifically entrusted with the care of children and women and the general socio-economic context that affects their development and well-being, the impact of any disaster on the situation of children, and any disruption of the social services and institutions set up for their care, is of concern. In this respect, the issue of preparedness is crucial, in particular, the improvement of those aspects of the situation of women and children that make them more vulnerable to the impact of natural or man-made disaster. In recent years, within the framework of its mandate and long-term development objectives, UNICEF has been calling for a new ethic that would help to stop the largely heedless and preventable deaths of 35,000 children daily in developing countries. The overwhelming majority of those children are caught in "silent" emergencies, come primarily from poor families and suffer from malnutrition, preventable diseases and illiteracy. Those same problems exacerbate the impact of, and recovery from, natural disasters, since the poor and their surroundings are most prone to the immediate effects of hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

28. After recent natural disasters, including cyclones in Bangladesh, volcanic eruptions and floods in the Philippines, earthquakes in Afghanistan, Costa Rica and Panama, floods in China, Cuba, Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malawi, Myanmar and Viet Nam, the intervention and assistance of UNICEF were directed to the rehabilitation of essential services, support in the delivery of emergency commodities and acceleration in the recovery of ongoing programmes in

affected areas. This involved the restoration and re-equipping of basic health centres and water-supply systems, combined with immunization and activities to control diarrhoeal diseases.

29. UNICEF increasingly recognizes that an effective response to emergencies must begin with the early implementation of advance warning, prevention and preparedness activities, especially in countries known to be at risk because of ecological and internal pressure. Such activities are carried out as an integral art of UNICEF country programmes, and in close collaboration with other United Nations organizations.

30. The contribution of UNICEF, as a field-based operational programme, is in translating the aims and objectives of the Decade at the national and the community level and providing local and culturally specific data for use in designing appropriate response mechanisms. Some examples of both disaster mitigation and preparedness activities carried out by UNICEF are set out below:

(a) Training: UNICEF personnel and staff of counterpart national agencies have received training in early warning and risk-mapping, data collection, assessment and monitoring and evaluation of projects and emergency management in general. For example, training and assistance in local capacity-building were provided to the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia, and the Department for Prevention and Preparedness against Natural Disasters in Mozambique;

(b) Built-in responses: quick action response programmes have been set up to facilitate local storage of supplies and medicines, which will make possible the prompt implementation of high priority measures, such as the provision of tools, seeds and livestock for speedy recovery in the wake of disaster;

(c) Preparedness and prevention linked to ongoing development programmes: this involves the development of adequate country profiles and vulnerability analyses, development of appropriate storage facilities and food production strategies as part of household food security programmes and enhancement and advocacy for appropriately designed buildings and shelters in countries such as Bangladesh and the Philippines;

(d) Advocacy: promotion of prevention, preparedness and mitigation measures was carried out at the World Summit for Children, in 1990, and continues through a network of national committees. Activities are directed towards raising funds and other support to implement mitigation programmes, and increasing awareness of the impact of disasters, especially for vulnerable groups, linking the questions of protection, development and disaster vulnerability.

31. Over the next two years, UNICEF intends to expand and give added depth to the implementation and advocacy of Decade-related issues, particularly within its own programmes, such as the development of appropriate vulnerability analysis and response mechanisms, and the linking of UNICEF disaster reduction and development initiatives to conservation and environmental issues as discussed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Advocacy and information will be strengthened through its media and social mobilization and communications programmes, in particular through the

dissemination of information in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways for use at community level by health agents, rural extension workers and local institutions.

B. United Nations Development Programme

Disaster management training programme

32. Under the disaster management training programme established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat five regional workshops and several headquarters-based training events have been held, while country-specific training has been provided to 24 countries prone to disasters or emergencies. In addition, in March 1993, a special policy-oriented workshop was conducted for 16 resident coordinators and senior Headquarters officials of UNDP and the Department.

33. It is projected that the programme must be continued at least until the end of 1994 if it is to fulfil its objectives of providing training to government, non-governmental organization and United Nations officials in some 70 developing countries, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly called for the programme to be strengthened and broadened.

34. UNDP has provided $3.9 million of its Special Programme Reserve for the funding of the programme. In addition, six donors (Canada, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America) have provided $3 million in special contributions.

35. Trainers have been drawn from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in addition to country-based resource persons.

36. Subcontracts for the conduct of workshops have been awarded to the following regionally based institutions:

(a) Asia and the Pacific: the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre of the Asian Institute of Technology (Bangkok) and the UNDP Development Training and Communication Planning Unit;

(b) Africa: the Disaster Management Centre (Cranfield, United Kingdom), backstopping the coordinator for Africa of the disaster management training programme, based at Addis Ababa;

(c) Middle East: the American University in Beirut;

(d) Latin America and the Caribbean: the Organization of American States and the Pan American Health Organization.

37. Further subcontracts have been awarded to the Disaster Management Centre at the University of Wisconsin at Madison for global backstopping, including the training of trainers and materials development.

United Nations Volunteers

38. In liaison with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the secretariat of the Decade, the United Nations Volunteers programme drafted a proposal for the United Nations Volunteers technical support project for the national/regional development of disaster management institutions. The purpose of the project is to provide specialists to regional disaster management centres to assist in training and in the designing and implementation of national disaster management plans. Those experts would also serve at the regional level as stand-by teams for rapid disaster assessment. That project proposal is still under review.

C. United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance

39. The United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance was established for an experimental phase of 18 months and is to be reviewed by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in May 1993. Its primary objective is to complement, harmonize and strengthen the international response capacity to environmental emergencies.

40. One of the most important products of the Centre's work during the experimental period has been the preparation of a draft framework for a United Nations environmental emergency plan as an aid in identifying precise roles and responsibilities, so as to ensure rapid and effective response in time of emergency. A provisional network of national focal points has also been established representing all global regions and serving as a base on which to build the international response capacity to environmental emergencies.

41. The future evolution of the Centre as a focal point in the United Nations system for information on and the coordination of environmental emergencies is being considered. The Centre also envisages a cooperative programme to further the aims of the Decade.

D. Economic Commission for Europe

42. As part of the work programme of the Timber Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), and in order to provide countries with the latest information on forest fire damage, prevention and control, the secretariat of the Timber Committee collects and publishes annually statistics on the number, area, causes, value of losses and other aspects of forest fires. It also publishes, biannually, the International Forest Fire News, which is intended to enhance the exchange of information on wildland fire management and sciences. The ECE Timber Committee has also participated actively in the follow-up work to resolution 3, on a decentralized European data bank on forest fires, adopted by the Ministerial Conference on the Production of Forests in Europe, held in

December 1990. A seminar on forest fire prevention, land use and population was held in Greece in October and November 1991.

43. The ECE Timber Committee promotes the rapid international dissemination of reliable information on sudden and severe damage to forests in the ECE region, notably that caused by fire, wind, snow, and insect infestation, so as to reduce disruption of wood markets. The Committee also examines the implications of air pollution and other damage to forests for wood supply and markets by keeping under review possible consequences of damage to forests, and decides on action as necessary.

E. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

44. For many years the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has evaluated the damage caused by natural disasters and issued reports on the effects of natural disasters on economic development and living conditions in vulnerable member countries. Those analyses are used to support government requests for international cooperation assistance for post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. In 1992, for example, evaluations were carried out in Nicaragua after the eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano and in the aftermath of the tsunami in September. In addition to providing those reports, ECLAC has published a comprehensive manual (Manual para la estimación de los efectos socio-económicos de los desastres naturales) describing the methodology used in making its assessments.

45. On completion of the technical cooperation project on natural disaster prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean, which identified 15 river basins in the region requiring the establishment or modernization of flood forecasting and warning systems, ECLAC submitted a proposal to the Government of Italy for further support for the next project phase, namely, the designing of the forecasting and warning systems.

F. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

46. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), jointly with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), whose functions are now carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, organized a regional symposium on the Decade in Asia and the Pacific and a workshop on the application of space technology in combating natural disasters. Other activities in natural disaster reduction have focused on water-related and geological hazards. They include training activities, such as a workshop on forecasting, preparedness and operational measures for water-related natural disaster reduction in the region and the organization of a course on land subsidence; advisory services provided to flood-prone member countries through the medium of a roving seminar on comprehensive flood loss prevention and management; and the publishing and distribution of manuals and guidelines on flood loss prevention, mitigation and management, and land-use planning. The commission also continues to provide substantive support to the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

G. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

47. In order to enhance the capacity of professionals and Governments to integrate disaster mitigation considerations into their human settlements planning, development and management efforts, and to ensure that post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation activities are development oriented, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has not only kept up the pace but even extended its assistance and activities in those areas.

48. In collaboration with the World Bank and UNDP, Habitat is developing an interregional project on the reduction of vulnerability to natural or technological disasters in metropolitan areas. That project is one of the recognized international demonstration projects for the Decade. The four selected metropolitan areas for the initial case studies are located in Brazil, the Philippines and Turkey and the outputs will be reviewed at an international meeting to be held in 1993. Because other Governments have expressed interest, additional funding is being sought to expand the project.

49. In the area of seismic disasters, assistance in the reconstruction and development of the area affected by the earthquake in the Estrella Valley has been provided to Panama and Costa Rica with the objective of drawing up strategies for reconstruction, establishing priorities and identifying requirements for future assistance in areas of disaster mitigation and management. Since the 1987 earthquake in Ecuador, Habitat has assisted reconstruction, using appropriate technologies, in housing, infrastructure and community work. Extensive training and audio-visual training materials have been produced to support the programme and an Appropriate Technology Unit and a Documentation Centre have been installed. In Algeria, Habitat is assisting the National Centre for Applied Research in Paraseismic Engineering to strengthen national technical capacity, so as to enable that Centre to undertake full responsibility in seismic-risk mitigation in Algeria. Following an inter-agency mission to the Islamic Republic of Iran after the Manjil earthquake in 1990, Habitat is providing technical support for the implementation of a post-earthquake rehabilitation programme using earthquake-resistant construction techniques. In Nepal, Habitat is continuing to assist in enhancing institutional capacity to formulate programmes for managing and monitoring reconstruction and rehabilitation in the earthquake-affected areas. Following Habitat assistance in recovery and redevelopment after the Philippines earthquake in 1990, the major recommendations concerning reconstruction strategies are being implemented under various national and donor programmes. Assistance has also been provided to Jamaica on seismic monitoring and research. A video film and a publication on mitigating the effects of earthquakes on human settlements have been prepared and distributed world wide.

50. In the area of flood mitigation, assistance has continued to be provided to Bangladesh to improve the supply, delivery and durability of building materials and techniques, and to identify replicable housing delivery systems and programmes that are flood-mitigating and will form part of a national rural housing strategy. In Pakistan, a rehabilitation and reconstruction programme for flood-affected villages, rural housing and infrastructure is being implemented. The project will propose policies and programmes for future flood-damage mitigation and management.

51. With regard to landslides, Habitat is assisting Sri Lanka with analysis and hazard mapping, to provide the basis for systematic consideration of slope stability in land-use planning, appropriate land-use management in high-risk areas, and relocation of existing settlements and infrastructure facilities.

52. In the area of hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones, Montserrat is receiving assistance from Habitat for post-hurricane rehabilitation of housing, including longer-term institutional arrangements. In addition, a pilot scheme for volunteer housing rehabilitation crews has been developed in Montserrat, which involves inter alia, the hiring of student artisans from the region and the establishment of technical service centres where self-help builders can obtain professional advice and assistance. As a follow-up to those efforts and at the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Habitat and UNDP produced a film on hurricane-resistant construction, based on the Montserrat experience. It is supplemented by a construction manual which is being used in training seminars and issued together with housing development applications. Since development control mechanisms can contribute significantly to efforts at disaster mitigation, Habitat and UNDP have developed prototype development control legislation which will be tailored to local needs for all OECS countries. A video film highlighting the main features of the rehabilitation exercise will be produced to promote further operations based on technical cooperation among developing countries. In this regard, several workshops have been held in the Caribbean area.

53. Habitat is providing assistance to the areas of Belarus affected by the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The main expected outcome is a revised comprehensive scheme for the territorial development of Belarus, introducing advanced technologies and methods, database and monitoring systems, and introducing new concepts and methods in construction management.

54. As part of its research and operational activities and as a contribution to the Decade, Habitat has produced a publication entitled Planning and Management for Disaster Reduction.

H. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

55. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has continued to participate in the work related to the Decade. The support provided to the Decade is in the context of the constitutional role of FAO in all matters related to food and agriculture, in particular its mandate for the development, use and conservation of natural resources. Many, if not most of the technical capabilities and assistance activities of FAO are relevant to rational management of natural resources, and relate to natural disaster assessment, prevention, preparedness, mitigation, relief and rehabilitation.

56. The FAO Office for Special Relief Operations has continued to be the focal point for the implementation of emergency relief measures. The activities of that Office related to the Decade are aimed at mitigating the impact of natural calamities on rural populations through the supply of inputs required for livestock and crop protection and the rehabilitation of crops, livestock and the forestry and fishery sectors. Efforts have also been made to integrate

preparedness and prevention measures within the projects executed by that Office.

57. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) continues to monitor crop and food supply conditions throughout the world, particularly in developing countries most vulnerable to food shortages and disasters and where emergency situations may arise. In addition to its regular monitoring, GIEWS crop and food supply assessment missions are fielded jointly with the World Food Programme, including the evaluation of the food requirements of the identified target beneficiary groups and logistics aspects.

58. Within its food security mandate, as follow-up to the 1974 World Food Conference, FAO assists Governments in: setting up national food security programmes; designing and implementing national or regional early warning systems; determining the level of and managing strategic grain reserves (national food security stocks and food stocks at village or family level); monitoring food aid programmes; and designing national preparedness plans for acute food shortages.

59. Following the adoption of the enlarged concept of world food security, the Food Security Assistance Scheme has assisted interested countries in developing comprehensive national food security policies and programmes covering all three aspects of food security policy objectives, namely, availability of basic grains, stability of supply and access to food by all people.

60. It is anticipated that the activities of the Scheme will be further expanded as a result of the commitment of participating countries to the Plan of Action for Nutrition adopted by the International Conference on Nutrition convened jointly by FAO and the World Health Organization in December 1992 in Rome. That Plan of Action includes objectives for the improvement of household food security and the elaboration of national and regional comprehensive food security policies and programmes.

61. Work is currently under way for the development of a household food security index. The primary purpose of that work is to develop an indicator that could be used at the international level, with wide country coverage, to monitor trends in access to food at household level, and to identify situations where food insecurity appears to be deteriorating over time and where international action might be required. This composite index approach will be further reviewed in the light of results obtained from two related country-level studies, one on the identification of socio-economic indicators for monitoring access to food of vulnerable groups and the other on risk mapping to be developed by GIEWS with support from EEC and the Save the Children Fund.

62. Data existing in FAO which may be used for disaster mitigation and preparedness activities include the GIEWS databases covering current supply and utilization accounts, crop forecasting, donor pledges and import capacity by country; and projected shortages and historical food aid flows by donor, recipient and commodity. Both of those databases are computerized and are used in regular publications, such as Food Outlook, Food Crops and Shortages and Food Aid in Figures.

63. The activities of FAO in disaster mitigation include, in addition to early warning systems, vulnerability assessment and monitoring, for instance, nutritional surveillance and remote sensing for environment monitoring; general data and information systems on agricultural statistics, soil classification, water resources, prices and stock policies etc. Measures to reduce vulnerability include promoting food production on a sustainable basis, strengthening food storage and processing at national and household levels, and management and institutional support.

64. A number of FAO programmes carried out with a view to enhancing food and agricultural development also contribute to disaster prevention. For example, improving the capabilities of countries in land-use planning and soil and water conservation for sustainable agriculture and rural development can also contribute to improved country capacity to control drought, floods and landslides.

65. FAO has set up an interdivisional Emergency Coordination Group, with terms of reference that include ensuring that coordinated action is taken in critical situations arising from the reports of GIEWS, serving as the mechanism for disaster preparedness and close monitoring of situations, ensuring appropriate links and coordination between emergency and post-emergency action, including reconstruction, rehabilitation and longer-term development, and monitoring the flow of financial resources for emergency activities.

66. FAO has also been participating in the disaster management training programme by providing experts to regional and country workshops and seminars. The organization has cooperated with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the establishment of a register of disaster management expertise, containing information on rosters maintained for emergency-related purposes.

I. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

67. The activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in natural disaster reduction have been geared towards gaining a better scientific understanding of the intensity of natural hazards and their distribution in time and space. Those activities include helping set up reliable observatory and early-warning networks and systems for natural hazards; devising rational land-use plans; securing the adoption of suitable building design and protecting educational buildings and cultural monuments; strengthening environmental protection for the prevention of natural disasters; enhancing preparedness and public awareness through information and education; and fostering post-disaster investigation, recovery and rehabilitation.

68. There has been significant progress in the implementation of Decade demonstration projects falling under the responsibility of UNESCO (see the addendum to the present report). Various publications and training materials have been produced, covering earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and tsunamis, aimed at a wide range of readers from schoolchildren to staff in governmental and non-governmental organizations.

69. Jointly with the Council of Europe and the United States Geological Survey, planning has been initiated by UNESCO for a post-earthquake evaluation programme aimed at creating a mechanism for sharing information after the occurrence of an earthquake; seeking ways to strengthen interdisciplinary interfaces before, during and after investigations; and developing post-earthquake workshops to foster mitigation, preparedness and recovery. As part of this process three different reconnaissance missions, dispatched by UNESCO to Cairo in October 1992 immediately after the Dashur earthquake, made recommendations on the modernization and development of the seismological observatory network, on the restoration of the affected cultural and religious buildings, and on the restoration of educational establishments and school buildings.

70. UNESCO organized a regional consultation on disaster communication, focusing on the role of modern communications media in disaster and emergency warning and relief operations in the Caribbean.

71. UNESCO has also been actively engaged in the activities of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, inaugurated in May 1992, with the objective of mastering information on the meteorological, hydrological, ecological and socio-economic aspects of the environment in order to combat drought and desertification.

J. World Health Organization

72. The Decade has provided the World Health Organization (WHO) with an important opportunity to strengthen the health sector preparedness capacities of member States. WHO adopted a formal programme for the Decade in 1990, and extensive regional programmes have been adopted and implemented by the WHO Regional Offices for the Americas (PAHO) and South-East Asia (SEARO). The priorities of WHO have been three: to promote the Decade among the organization's many contacts in the health sector, particularly Ministries of Health; to improve national preparedness capacities for disaster management in the health sector; and to conduct research and prepare guidelines on the health ramifications of disasters.

73. WHO has promoted the Decade by dedicating its 1991 World Health Day to emergency preparedness and producing articles, exhibits, videos, brochures and posters for the event in several languages. In addition, an extensive public information campaign was conducted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in the Americas to promote disaster preparedness training workshops. Such workshops have been held at the national level, for example in India in 1991 and 1992 and in Bangladesh in October 1991, and at the regional level, for example the WHO National Emergency Preparedness Workshop held at Bangkok in February 1993. PAHO has prepared a major regional information campaign for the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1993, after meetings with health ministries, donors and non-governmental organizations, and is producing a poster, logo, video and other information materials.

74. The four WHO demonstration projects for the Decade are well under way. Other WHO projects conducted in the context of the Decade are the development of community emergency preparedness guidelines for local use in the first 72 hours following natural disasters; the development of nine rapid assessment protocols for use in emergencies; and research on health issues for displaced populations,

through its "Health and Development for Displaced Populations" programme. PAHO has developed software and special supply labels and conducted many national training workshops to improve emergency supply management through its Supply Management System Following Disasters project.

K. International Telecommunication Union

75. The work of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in disaster mitigation follows the recommendations of a colloquium organized in Finland in 1991, which are contained in the Tampere Declaration. The main thrust of the Declaration was to undertake work towards a convention on disaster communications, which would establish a framework for cooperation between States and non-governmental organizations, including telecommunications operating organizations also active in the commercial sector; to that end the maximum use of existing communication networks would be sought and an inventory of disaster communication equipment and resources would be kept by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at Geneva. The Declaration also contained a number of technical recommendations for the elimination of regulatory barriers in case of disaster.

76. In order to give effect to the Information Strategy for the Decade, as agreed during the first session of the Scientific and Technical Committee, ITU celebrated World Telecommunication Day (17 May 1991) with the theme "Telecommunications and the safety of human life". The theme was designed to publicize the Decade and to highlight the important role that telecommunications play in disaster work. A publication for the occasion, prepared jointly by ITU and UNDRO, was distributed all over the world.

L. World Meteorological Organization

77. The eleventh Congress of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in 1991, adopted a Plan of Action for the Decade that recognized the leading role of WMO in relation to disasters caused by tropical cyclones, floods, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms, other severe weather phenomena, landslides and avalanches, and droughts, and the contribution WMO could make to the mitigation of other types of disaster.

78. In the Plan of Action it was noted that many projects under the Tropical Cyclone Programme, and the Hydrology and Water Resources Programme fell completely, or in very large part, within the scope of the Decade, for example the development of advanced technology and transfer of technology, World Weather Watch support and additional facilities for tropical cyclone warning systems, tropical cyclone and storm surge simulation, forecasting and warning, flood forecasting and risk assessment, development of tropical cyclone mitigation systems and promotion of public information, and hydrological forecasting and warning, water resources assessment and forecasting for complex river systems.

79. The Plan of Action also included three special projects for the Decade which have been adopted by the Scientific and Technical Committee as international demonstration projects, relating to (a) a tropical cyclone warning

system for the south-west Indian Ocean region; (b) comprehensive risk assessment; and (c) technology exchange for natural disasters.

80. Three regional project proposals, entitled "Reduction of natural disasters related to tropical cyclones in the South Pacific region", "Reduction of natural disasters related mainly to typhoon-induced flooding" and "Reduction of natural disasters related to tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea", have been submitted to UNDP for inclusion in its fifth intercountry programme cycle but have not yet received approval.

81. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), an intergovernmental organization, is seeking technical cooperation with WMO, specifically for the publication of a handbook on natural disaster reduction in tourist areas. The aim of the publication is to offer practical advice on the protection of tourist developments and resorts, particularly in developing countries, from the consequences of natural climatic disasters. A consultation mission to WTO in April 1992 finalized the outline of the handbook and proposed consultant/expert services to be provided by WMO for the completion during 1993 of two chapters, on tropical cyclones and associated storm surges and on flooding.

82. The WMO Commission for Basic Systems at its tenth session (Geneva, November 1992) discussed the Decade and noted that the World Weather Watch system served as a basis for improving the capabilities of national meteorological services with regard to environmental disasters. Thus a contribution that WMO could make to the Decade would be the further development and implementation of the system. To this effect it recommended that national meteorological and hydrological services should take steps for the establishment of adequate climatological, meteorological and hydrological databases and to promote risk assessments using those data.

83. A report on meteorological risk management is scheduled to be issued in the Tropical Cyclone Programme series in the second half of 1993.

84. The WMO Commission for Hydrology met at Geneva in January 1993, and re-established its Working Group on Hydrological Forecasting and Applications for Water Management. That group has six rapporteurs who will report to the Commission at its next session on recent developments in forecasting of direct relevance to the prevention of disasters.

85. WMO Regional Tropical Cyclone Committees have adopted a simple numerical scheme for the rating of flood forecasting systems. This system, called Management Overview of Flood Forecasting Systems, assigns maximum numeric scores to some 20 different components of a flood forecasting system, for example data measurement, data transmission, hydrological model performance, distribution of warnings etc. The hydrologist can then score his system against this scale and obtain a measure of the performance of the system, both as a whole and for separate components. The system is being applied in all regions and is highlighting areas that need improvement in the different flood forecasting systems.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASSOCIATIONS

86. In 1990 the General Committee of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), set up a Special Committee for the Decade to provide advice to the members of ICSU on the harmonization and coordination of their efforts to reduce the human impacts of natural disasters and to organize a vigorous and effective ICSU contribution to the Decade. Since then the Special Committee has formulated integrated policies for the Decade at three meetings, held in January 1992 (Paris), August 1992 (Pasadena) and February 1993 (Moscow). Under those policies, education and training activities, as well as six Decade-related projects on tropical cyclone, volcano and earthquake hazards, famine, megacity protection and Lake Nyos-type hazards have been implemented by ICSU and its members, or jointly with United Nations organizations. All projects are making good progress and four have also been endorsed as demonstration projects by the Scientific and Technical Committee.

87. In 1992, the International Association for Earthquake Engineering founded the World Seismic Safety Initiative, a long-term international cooperative scheme that will advance and spread earthquake engineering knowledge world wide. That initiative was endorsed by delegates to the tenth World Conference on Earthquake Engineering, held at Madrid in July 1992, and by the Scientific and Technical Committee in 1993 as an international project for the Decade. A first workshop on seismic risk management for countries of the Asia and Pacific region was held at Bangkok and was attended by 30 participants from 19 countries.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

88. During the reporting period, the secretariat was strengthened by secondment of staff and financial contributions from Governments and the private sector. The Secretary-General appointed a Director to the secretariat after the establishment of the post, as approved by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, with the responsibilities of coordinating work in the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade. This has not only resulted in the consolidation of the necessary leadership of the secretariat, previously ensured through temporary arrangements, but also provides adequate recognition in the United Nations of the importance of disaster reduction policies and programmes, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his statement at the second session of the Special High-Level Council (see para. 3 above).

89. The Director of the secretariat of the Decade assumed his functions in March 1993. In addition, a number of staff members have joined the secretariat, whose posts are supported by Governments as a contribution to the Decade, namely, an expert for disaster management, supported by the Government of the United States of America; an expert in earthquake engineering, on loan on a non-reimbursable basis, supported by the Government of Japan; a public information officer supported by the Government of the United Kingdom; an expert for economics supported by the Government of Finland; and an Expert for National Committees supported by the Government of Germany. Arrangements are under way to add two more experts who are to be funded by the Government of Italy in the

areas of project development and management of the Decade newsletter, STOP Disasters.

90. Moreover, an agreement has been reached with the Government of Sweden to provide for an associate expert, outposted in Costa Rica, to assist countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region in assessing their vulnerability and putting into place disaster mitigation strategies. Arrangements are being finalized with the Government of Japan for a junior Professional officer to join the secretariat to assist in preparations for the 1994 Conference.

91. The programme of work of the secretariat of the Decade consists mainly of:

(a) Supporting national committees and programmes for the Decade;

(b) Public information activities;

(c) Servicing the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee;

(d) Collaboration with United Nations organizations, and the scientific community;

(e) Preparing for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to be held in May 1994.

92. In 1993, the integration of the secretariat into the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has led to closer interaction with the concerned branches of the Department at Geneva, such as the Disaster Mitigation Branch and the Information and Resource Mobilization Branch. This process will continue to be intensified and strengthened.

93. From January 1992 to April 1993, a total of $US 1,520,000 has been received in the Trust Fund, comprising contributions from the Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland, and from the private sector. In addition, some experts are supported directly by Governments, and a junior Professional officer is funded through UNDP. These contributions, with remaining funds provided by the Government of Japan and administered by the Human Resources Development Fund of UNDP, have made it possible to implement the programme of work recommended by the Scientific and Technical Committee and the convening of two sessions of the Committee and one session of the Special High-Level Council.

94. Governments contributing to the Trust Fund for the Decade in cash or in kind have given preference to supporting the programme for the Decade, while funding of demonstration projects, which requires a much higher level of contribution, is mainly on a bilateral basis or directly from donors to the implementing organizations. There are two thrusts in the funding of disaster reduction projects, namely:

(a) Financial support for international or national projects designed to illustrate the benefits of disaster reduction;

(b) The inclusion of disaster mitigation in bilateral and multilateral development assistance programmes through risk assessment of vulnerable countries, where this still remains to be done, and of their national projects funded or considered for funding to ensure that new and existing projects will not themselves be exposed to natural and other hazards; and that they are directed towards reducing the level of country vulnerability to natural disasters.

95. It is only through such a systematic approach that the existing upward trend of casualties and social and economic disruption will be reversed. It is indeed striking that the most recent statistics for economic losses indicate a trebling of costs during the past three decades, reaching a total of $US 44 billion for the period 1991-1992.

96. Finally, the stabilization of the secretariat of the Decade, as described above, is an indication of a renewed level of trust on the part of Member States and of the commitment of the United Nations to fulfilling the mandate it has accepted at the initiative of the scientific community by proclaiming the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

ANNEX

Towards the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction: a 12-point Plan of Action adopted by the Special High-Level Council

The Special High-Level Council for the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction,

Having considered the progress in the formulation of disaster mitigation policies in vulnerable countries undertaken by national committees established for the Decade,

Encouraged by the positive response given by the General Assembly to the recommendations contained in the New York Declaration, particularly in reference to the convening of a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction,

Impressed by the numerous initiatives undertaken by the scientific and technical sectors, as well as by private and public business sectors, to apply their knowledge and capabilities also to the prevention of the loss of life and the reduction of the damage caused by disasters,

Recognizing the importance of its own role in promoting awareness among policy makers and with the general public about the importance of undertaking disaster reduction actions ex ante and mobilizing resources to accelerate the implementation of disaster reduction plans during the Decade,

Aware of the close link between disaster mitigation and the sustainability of the economic and social development process, and deeply concerned by the increasing impact of disasters on vulnerable communities and cities, as well as on public services that are essential to the regular functioning of civil society, and by the worsening trend of economic losses,

1. Recommends the Secretary-General of the United Nations to inform immediately all States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and financing institutions of the convening of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in May 1994 in Japan, and of its preparatory process, and to propose to the Member States, at the next session of the General Assembly:

(a) To proceed forcefully, because of increasing disaster losses, with the formulation and implementation, in the context of national and local development processes, of prevention and preparedness strategies and projects designed to reduce each country's vulnerability, particularly that of children and other vulnerable groups, to natural hazards which need not necessarily lead to disasters for the stricken communities;

(b) To participate actively in the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and in its preparatory process by undertaking systematic assessments of national and local disaster risks, with the assistance of the intersectoral national committees for the Decade and also by organizing multidisciplinary national and regional technical meetings, so as to ensure that the entire

potential of each country, including its scientific and technical capability, is fully utilized towards disaster reduction, and by preparing comprehensive reports on the progress achieved and plans for further action to be presented at the Conference;

(c) To recognize the interrelationship between environmental concerns and disaster prevention already stressed in Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the importance of assessing the vulnerability of major projects to natural hazards, parallel with environmental impact assessments, which are increasingly becoming a common practice;

(d) To integrate into all bilateral and multilateral assistance projects, including investments and science and technology transfers, an assessment of the disaster vulnerability of those projects and the impact of their implementation on existing vulnerabilities to disasters;

(e) To re-examine, as a matter of priority and in the light of the recent tragic experiences with earthquakes, storms and floods and the increasing economic, social and public health losses sustained as a result of disasters, the adequacy of existing land-use regulations and building codes, the validity of their enforcement and monitoring procedures, and the public awareness of the benefits of those measures;

(f) To stimulate and encourage organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, international financing institutions and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to take into priority account the close relationship between disaster reduction measures and sustainable development in their investment and technical assistance programmes; to this end, a joint meeting of the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee with development organizations would be an important step;

(g) To call specifically on the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, in their regular programmes and as managers of the Global Environment Facility, to recognize the eligibility for funding of projects for the Decade that are directed towards reducing vulnerability to disasters and provide responses to global warming, including drought and cyclone preparedness and prevention projects;

2. Undertakes, in view of its mandate received from the General Assembly within the Framework of Action for the Decade:

(a) To promote public awareness and mobilize the necessary support from the public and private sectors through participation in a Plan of Action towards the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction;

(b) To visit government leaders in vulnerable countries to promote the adoption of national disaster mitigation policies to be integrated into the social and economic development process, including the educational system at all levels;

(c) To mobilize the participation of leading personalities from the private and public sectors in support of the activities of national committees, especially in those countries where disaster mitigation strategies are only at the initial stage;

(d) To address national, regional and technical meetings focusing on issues related to disaster mitigation in order to enlist the participation of all public and private sectors of society that have the potential to contribute to disaster reduction activities;

(e) To stimulate and conduct resource mobilization and fund-raising campaigns, including participation in observance programmes for the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction.